Broadband Issues Affecting People with Disabilities
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- Critical Importance of Broadband

    - "Always on" connection
    - Needed for independence, employment, productivity, citizenship
    - Taking the place of other forms of communication
    - IP Telephony, IM, e-mail, chat – functionally similar or identical but may lose access because of new classification as information services

- Market Forces – Insufficient to Protect Disability Needs

    - String of legislative, regulatory measures to ensure access
    - Community too small and fragmented to be influence competitive forces

- Accessibility Barriers to Broadband Services

    - Visual barriers to graphical interfaces
    - Mouse-driven commands without keyboard equivalents
    - Garbled TTY messages

- Readily Achievable Accessibility Features

    - Formats usable with screen-readers
    - Audio and text options (redundancy)
    - Keyboard equivalents
    - Packet solutions

Goal: Insure that these and other features are incorporated into the design of broadband technologies. If not incorporated early on, expensive and burdensome retrofitting will be needed at a later date.

- Legal Theories to Ensure Disability Access

    - Use of ancillary jurisdiction via Section 255 and Title I (previously used to reach IVR and voice mail systems)
    - Use of universal service obligations
    - Dual Congressional goals furthered:
        1. accessibility
        2. ubiquitous availability of broadband